(No. XII.)

THE PASTIME.

Schenectady, Saturday, June 13, 1807.

ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For the Pastime.

TRAVELLING MEMORANDA.

(Concluded.)

Feb. 8—The Sicilians have a singular manner of computing time. Instead of counting from 12 o'clock, midnight, to the next meridian, they count from sunset to sunset. So that, supposing at 3 P. M. you asked a Sicilian the time of day, he would tell you it was 21 o'clock, provided the sun set at six!

This morning, for the first time, I saw Mount Etna. Its white head appeared above the highest mountains around the city, tho' it is nearly two hundred miles distant from it!

Feb. 11—This day there was a visible, and almost total, eclipse of the sun. The transit came on about 32 minutes past 11 o'clock, and at half past twelve, we could see only a small part of the sun's disk, for eleven digits were eclipsed. There were two or three spots on her surface, which enabled us to mark the gradual progression of the moon. It was a singular and wonderful phenomenon! The King's offices, the custom-house, and all the stores in Palermo, were closed, by an order from government. All the statues, and saints, in the city, had lighted lamps placed before them. Thousands of the inhabitants fled from the city, fearing some awful event: some, an earthquake, and others, the dissolution of the universe. All the soldiers are ordered out, to guard the houses and properties of the terrified deserters!!

In the afternoon I had a delightful ride to the westward of Palermo, through "*La Colle*," a charming champaign country, situated between the mountains snd the city. It is about 24 miles long, and 8 in breadth. It is one continued garden, for it is almost exclusively improved by the Nobility and Gentry. Hither these "Lords of the Creation" retire when the spring advances; and, in the autumn, they go over to the "*Begaria*," another Paradise, to the eastward.

In our ride, we passed through an Orange Grove, at least three miles in extent. We stopped at a palace, now building for the King. It is in the Chinese taste and style, but, compared to the chasteness of the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian, orders, in which the neighbouring palaces are built, it is very contemptible.

In this grove are several trees of the "*Blood Orange;*" propagated by inoculating the common Orange into the Mulberry, or

Pomegranate. The fruit is exquisitely delicious. They derive their name from the colour of their juice.

In the evening I was at the comedy, which I prefer to the opera. There are four Theatres in the city, which are opened twice a week.

Feb. 13—This being the last day of the carnival, the diversions exceed all that have gone before. At about three, this afternoon, I went into the city. The streets were filled with masks, parading up and down, on foot and in carriages. At Mr. ——'s house I found a number of English officers, and other gentlemen, prepared for a frolic. We dressed, and masked, as a crew of sailors, provided ourselves with carriages, and with about 300 lbs. of sugar plumbs,* and confectionary, we sallied out, with three cheers, into the great street, where were at least a thousand carriages, and upwards of three thousand of the poorer class, on foot. The balconies of the windows were crowded with beauty and fashion. Nothing could exceed the gaiety of the scene. We, at once, declared war with every coach, and sometimes received more sugar plumbs than were agreeable. At length, we fell in with the French Consul's carriage, and half suffocated him with our hearty compliments: but a shower of sweet meats from the windows of a nunnery diverted our attention from Monsieur. They were excellent, and we preserved some of them until we got home. Thus, for about two hours, we continued our battle with the carriages on both sides, now and then glancing at the ladies in the balconies. Some of the ladies, in their coaches, wore tin shields, and fought desparately.

At length we arrived safe at Mr. ——'s house, bespattered and beplaster'd with sugar, and pretty sore with the shot we had received; for tho' formerly they used real sugar plumbs altogether, there are a few who take peas, beans, lupins, &c. frosted over with sugar. We had the satisfaction to *feel* some of these hard plumbs, which are not the most agreeable.

However, I will venture to assert that I never enjoyed myself better. Every one was animated with joy, and every countenance glowed with pleasure. The poor devils of Lazaroni, huzza'd, and scrambled in the dirt for the sugar plumbs, and tho' not personally engaged, they seemed to enjoy the day as much as we did.

The happy climate of Sicily makes the country a perfect paradise. Since we have been here, Farenheit's Thermometer never fell below 58°, although it is the height of winter.

The city of Palermo is governed by a Viceroy, whose power is absolute, notwithstanding their boasted liberty. The people have so long been accustomed to the yoke of tyranny, that they do not wish a change. Their society is very pleasant. They are hospitable and friendly to strangers, their manners are soft

* It is customary for passengers to salute one another with vollies of sugar plumbs and sweet-meats.

and engaging, and their politeness is sincere. The "Ciceroni" of this country are not such monsters as they have been represented, but they are bad enough; and for two ducats (less than three dollars) you may easily rid yourself of an enemy. I saw the heads of two of these murderers hanging over the gates of the city.

Palermo is exactly square, and about one mile in diameter. It is divided into four parts by two great streets, intersecting each other in the centre of the city, which forms a beautiful octagon, or square. From this spot you may command a prospect of the place. The palaces are built after the Doric and Ionic orders. The houses are very lofty, some of them from one to one hundred and twenty feet high. None but the gentry inhabit the 3d and 4th stories: the lower, are occupied by the poor. Every house has a court yard in the middle of it, and all the windows have balconies projecting into the street. They are filled with flowers, which, notwithstanding all the dirt and dust of so large a city, perfume the air. Palermo is said to contain 300 churches, monasteries, etc. and about 250,000 inhabitants.

Feb. 18—We are now ready for sea, and shall sail to-morrow.

BIOGRAPHY.

LIFE OF DERMODY.

(Continued.)

But the patronage and pecuniary pittance afforded to him by Sir James, was productive of no better effect in weaning him from his follies, than that of his former friends. Indeed, from the following anecdote, which displays at the same time the extreme debasement of the man, and the wonderful powers of the poet, he seems to have been irreclaimably attached to his habit of ebriety, and totally regardless of reputation or decency. Having been furnished with a new suit of clothes, as he was well drest, apparently relieved from his embarrassments, and with favourable prospects opening to him, his friends entertained a hope that he would have discretion enough to make good use of his prosperity. But this expectation was very short-lived. Within a week after he appeared in his new clothes, as Sir James Burges was sitting in the evening in his library, he heard a loud noise and a violent altercation in his hall. On going out to inquire the cause of such an unusual tumult, he found Dermody struggling with two of his servants, who endeavoured to prevent him from forcing his way into the house. And indeed his appearance was such as completely to justify them; for he was literally in rags, was covered with mud, (in which it had appeared that he had been just rolled) had a black eye, and a fresh wound on his head, from which the blood trickled down his breast; and to crown the whole, was so drunk as to be hardly able to stand or speak. As soon as Sir James could recognize him, he released him from the hands of his servants; and conducting him into his library, inquired the reason of his appearing in such a condition. Dermody accounted for his being so ill drest, by saying, that he had pawned his new clothes. As for his dirt and wounds, he said he had been arrested and carried to a spunging house, where he had been drinking with the bailiffs, and writing a poem, which he wished to take to Sir James, but they would not let him; so that he had watched his opportunity, and slipped off, but had been overtaken by them, and obliged to fight his way; in which, though with some damage, he had been ultimately suc-

cessful. He then gave S r James the poem, which proved to be his *Extravaganza;* the uncommon beauty and elegance of which have been universally acknowledged; and which, though it might add fresh honour to the first writer in our language, was thus produced in the midst of intemperance and brutality, by a wretch in a state of intoxication, and lost to every feeling of decency or shame. As he was not at that time in a condition to be argued with, Sir James advised him to return for the present to the spunging house, and promised to discharge the debt the next day.

Thus, Sir James continued for some time to supply him with money: but his conduct became so licentious, and his applications for pecuniary aid so importunate and offensive, that at length he was totally discarded, and his letters unnoticed. But astonishingly profligate as he was himself, we must do him the justice to say, that the knavery of his low companions was at least as copious a drain as his own wasteful expenditures. Possessed, as it were, by a strange infatuation, he could never shake off the oppressive power which these harpies had gained over his too easy disposition. They knew and nourished his foibles, in order to profit by them; and this they did at too large a cost, The sacrifice of his happiness was by them considered as trifling and indispensable, provided they were themselves to benefit by it; and even character and honourable feeling (which he sometimes told them were necessary to be preserved) were, when their exigencies pressed, to be given up. Such was the degrading condition to which his follies often reduced him, that he was considered by these wretches as in a state of vassalage, and by the dread of punishment to be rendered passive and obedient to their will. Sometimes he would, however, disregard their authority, and assert his independence; which he did by flying from one miserable lodging to another still more so: and remaining there till the same cause, or the terror of an arrest, compelled him to return to the former spot. Those who gained most by his weakness, were the persons with whom at various necessitous periods he lodged; and such was the power of the habit, or his fatal propensity for this kind of society, that he was continually involved with them in their poverty and low excesses. The little food he required was generally purchased and prepared by them; and no regular agreement having been made, a running account was always kept against Dermody; according to which the sum he owed them might, for any knowledge he had of the justice of the claim, have been at any time, one pound or one hundred.

They found this plan too profitable to adopt any other; and by keeping him always in debt, they kept him always in dread. Whenever he received a sum of money, he honestly brought it to his landlord, who always (as he termed it) "carried it to the account;" and when money was wanted, and Dermody had none to give, the request was in general followed by an arrest, which frequently turned out a very profitable speculation. The fear of a prison made him importune his friends, who never suffered him to languish in confinement: and as those who had occasioned his embarrassments were his messengers during such periods, they consequently obtained a knowledge of his patrons, and turned the kind benevolence, intended to relieve him, into a source of emolument to themselves.

The natural consequence of thoughtlessness and dissipation is dependence; and as Dermody had in his exigencies, no other means of support than what these associates were pleased to afford him, he conceived himself bound, when fortune smiled upon him, not only to discharge his debts of this description, but to bestow some signal mark of favour for the kindness thus conferred on him while pennyless. These returns varied, according as the obligations he laboured under were weighty or trivial; without any consideration of the motive which occasioned them. At one time he might be seen in his garret in company with his hosts, the cobler and his wife, and some attic lodger of equal consequence, regaling on a goose which

his industry had roasted by a string in his own apartment, while the pallet-bed, which stood in a corner, was strewed with various vegetables; the fire-side decorated with numerous foaming pots of porter; and the cobler's work-stool, boot-leg, lap-stone, &c. were commodiously placed as seats. On another occasion, in some neighbouring ale-house, entertaining the same personages with the various articles which resorts of this description generally afford: where, as the astonished guests, enveloped in clouds of smoke, sat listening with rapture to the eloquence of Dermody, the host was to be seen in the back ground, applauding with one hand, while his other dexterously scored an additional item to the bill; which, if Dermody could not discharge it during the following day, was at once put into the hands of some pettifogging practitioner of the law, and the unfortunate debtor appeared in the evening through the bars of a sponging-house, like Bajazet in his iron cage.

These excesses at length injured his constitution, and brought on an asthmatic complaint. Being admonished of the fatal consequences that must result from his continuing his intemperate course of life, he resolved upon a reform, which, after many severe struggles, he accomplished.

[To be continued.]

LITERARY PARAGRAPHS.

Had it been in our power, we should have followed our brief notice of '*Fashions Analysis*,' by some criticisms upon the merits of the production. This purpose has been frustrated by many intervening claims upon our time and attention. We are unwilling, however, to deny our readers the pleasure of perusing some of the most prominent passages: and we shall, as our circumscribed limits, and the necessity of varying our subjects, will allow, occasionally gratify them with selections from the work. We are not so blinded by our friendship for the author, or our high opinion of his poetical powers, as to pronounce it faultless. We would ask, in the language of one of the most classical writers of the present age, What star of genius can be found in the galaxy, never shorn of its beams, and glittering with perpetual splendour?

Yet who, that has soul enough to distinguish between elegant poetry, and drivelling nonsense, will not find a charm in lines like these, irresistably to impel the mind of sensibility within their magic circle?

Oh, vainly, Myra, hast thou toil'd to frame
Thyself to fashion—still art thou the same.
So fair yet meek, so innocent yet gay,
Thou canst not hide thy matchless *self* away.
Still art thou lovely, spite of all thy toil,
For truth and sweetness never left thy smile.
Full oft when fashion waves her torch on high
And bids the hour be mirth—I've heard thee sigh.
Thy lip indeed was smiles; but ah, how sad
The hermit hues in which thy *heart* was clad!
And I have trac'd amid the wildest storm
Of Winter's vengeance, trac'd thine angel form
On deeds of mercy bent, emerging fair
From fashion's realms to seek and sooth despair:

Literary Paragraphs.

Watch'd thy soft step, e'er follies fires were low,
On the meek threshold of neglected woe.
Ah, thou wert not unseen—Heav'n mark'd thee well,
And counted every kindness as it fell;
And 'bless you, lady,' dwells recorded there
Where blessings ever wait the poor man's pray'r.*

From the Emerald.

THE BOSTON ATHENÆUM.

Dedicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores.

An establishment has long been wanted in this town, that should be a cabinet for what was curious, and a depository for what was rare. This is now supplied by THE BOSTON ATHENÆUM, in a style which bids fair to exceed the expectations of enthusiasm. The "Memoir" published explains the object and plan, of which not the highest recommendation is the fact, that $40,000 have been subscribed to prosper the institution. This reflects equal honour on the enterprize of its projectors and the munificence of its patrons. The acorn, out of which grew this oak, was "THE ANTHOLOGY READING ROOM;" and though thus small be the radical principle, the plant is of such rapid growth, that under the shadow of its branches the people of the state will soon find *otium cum dignitate*, elegance and ease.

It is with pleasure and pride we commend this institution to public notice and favour. So illustrious are its advocates, we can advance nothing new. When such men sound the clarion, who can swell the note of praise? still we feel impelled to this effort

* This species of benevolence is beautifully exemplified in this city, in an association of female virtue, for the relief of female want. Never perhaps did an institution spring up in a more auspicious dress; or present itself in a more eloquent attitude to the public sensibility. Headed by a venerable woman, whose talents shed a lustre over her many virtues, and marshalling within its limits half the beauty and accomplishments of her sex, it presents the singular spectacle of an *incorporated* society *exclusively* composed of *females*.

This institution professes to relieve the most helpless of all objects, the *widow with small children*. This has been done with impartiality and effect; and even when the funds have been inadequate to answer the claims of all, *none* have been suffered to feel the penury of *utter neglect*.

Surely to the benevolent no spectacle can be more captivating than that of opulence descending from her chariot to visit the abodes of want: and it is now no uncommon spectacle to see the equipages of our first families waiting in an obscure corner of the suburbs, at the entrance of some wretched hovel.

Petulance may scoff at the idea of *incorporated* females, but the benevolent will cherish the *combination*. Heaven seems to have framed the sex to be the ambassadors of charity; for it has given them a softer conformation, and more susceptible hearts, yet society necessarily limits the efforts of their individual benevolence to a narrow and partial space. The present institution has the advantage of combining and emboldening their efforts, and opens a field to female sympathy in which it may indulge itself with effect.

from sense of duty. The same moment that made "man a living soul," bound him to the improvement of his rational nature. Talents and the obligations to cultivate them, were inhaled at the same divine inspiration. There is to literature A NATURAL ALLEGIANCE that can never be dissolved, and is paramount to all other obligations. We feel its binding force, and are happy at all times to acknowledge it, by invariably and ardently encouraging and supporting, as far as we are able, every enterprize that may tend to give extension to science, elegance to literature, and refinement to taste. Satisfied that such is the exclusive tendency of this institution, we say to it, in the words of TULLY, "Perge quo cæpisti!" It tends to add liberality to mind and accomplishment to person; to make scholars gentlemen and gentlemen scholars. "Exornet ætatis nostræ gloriam!"

ORIGINAL POETRY.

For the Pastime.

VANITY OF LIFE.

Why, foolish man, why yield to pride,
And toil for baubles soon to fade,
The GRAVE erewhile thyself shall hide,
And glory's meteor, death shall shade.

TO FUTURE TIMES extend thine eye,
In fancy's mirror read thy doom;
Cold and insensate shalt thou lie,
Forgotten in the silent tomb.

The wind that rustles o'er thy grave,
Unheard by thee shall pass along,
Unheard, the winter's storm shall rave.
And roar the cypress shades among,

In an *Appendix* to the Winter in Town, we read the following nervous, and highly poetical,

ODE,

Commemorative of the destruction of a corps of Emigrant Hussars, under Prince Conde, on the night of the battle of Kamlach.

[This corps was composed principally of young French noblemen,* who, having escaped the massacre of their families and their king, had formed themselves into a body for the purpose of avenging themselves on the authors of their misfortunes. They chose *black* for their uniform, in allusion to their situation and their cause. In several actions under the Archduke Charles, they performed wonders; and on the fatal night alluded to, were destined to attack the advanced guard of the French, under Moreau. This they executed with an impetuosity which nothing could resist, and for a while carried every thing before them; the main body of the enemy coming up shortly after, the brave assailants were overwhelmed by numbers, and cut to pieces in the conflict. Thus was the best blood of France mixed with the earth, and the last hope of her loyalty extinguished for ever!]

SCENE—BANKS OF THE DANUBE.

'TIS night—yet still the star
Of ev'ning lingers in the west;
The sinewy limbs of war
Have sunk to rest.
From ev'ry forest-tufted height,
The faithful beacon's monitory light

* *See Life and Campaigns of Moreau, page* 38.

Ode.

Flings its pale beam ;
While shadowing many a cliff beneath,
Dwells all the silent pomp of death
Dark o'er the stream !
Devoted stream ! 'tis thine to pour
A billow ever purpled o'er ;
From realm to realm still doom'd to glide
With war and valour at thy side,
And taught at ev'ry turn to lave
Some soldier's willow-woven grave—
Night wraps thee now ; and from thy cliffy verge
The sentry's measur'd footstep meets the ear,
Attentive to the pebbly surge
That murmurs near.—
Ha ! from yon mountain's shadowy side,
In knight's attire
What sable troop so furious glide,
Dark'ning the forest fire ?
A silvery gleam
Plays on their polish'd helms, and blades of massy steel.
Youthful, yet sad they seem.
On ev'ry martial brow is hung
The mem'ry of some mournful date,
And ev'ry arm is strung
To conquer fate !
Rush on ye knights of sable hue !
Your France has still a tear
To shed for you.—
The spirit of your king is near !
And many a form in memory dear
Points to the foe.—
Dark from the turret's mouldering mound
Impetuous on the foe they bound.—
Th' astonish'd foe gives way,
Half vanquish'd in the swift afray—
Death strews the ground.—
Ah, vict'ry vain ! ah, transient flight !
A thousand arms renew the fight ;
A thousand arms of unexhausted might.
O'erpow'r'd but not subdued, the band
Terrific struggle hand to hand ;
Till, pierc'd with many a wound, pale sinks each noble youth,
Resisting to his latest sigh
In all the native nerve of truth ;
Proud were he fought to lie.

Farewell ye gallant mourners at the tomb
Of parted monarchy !
Thy forest flow'r now sheds its simple bloom
To deck your cemetry !
And oh, mayhap at ev'ning's hour
Some stranger step may press that flow'r !
Some noble pilgrim doom'd to roam
Far from the rifled haunts of home,
Mute as he treads the mould'ring turf, may sigh—
Here, oh my France, thy *truth* and *honour* lie !

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